OUR OLD CHURCH AND THE NEW.

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ST. LOUIS, 1834-1871

THE GIFT OF HIS DAUGHTER

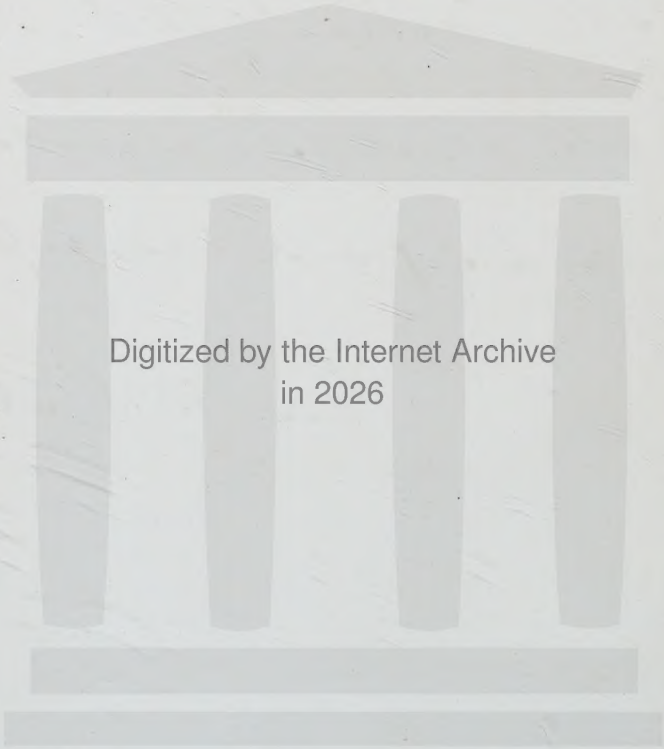
MRS. ROSE ELIOT SMITH

To Rev. William G. Eliot, D.D.

with affectionate regards

of his friend and pupil,

Geo. W. Cutter.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THE LAST SERMON PREACHED

IN THE

First Unitarian Church

SUNDAY, MAY 16TH,

AND

ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

Of the Church of Our Father,

BUFFALO, N. Y.

OCTOBER 13, 1880.

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FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH. Erected 1833.

Farewell Discourse in the Old Church,

BY THE PASTOR,

Rev. G. W. CUTTER.

"One soweth and another reapeth. I have sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored. Others have labored and ye have entered into their labor." —John 4–37.

Jesus draws illustrations from the labor of the husbandman. One soweth and another reapeth. It is even so in the spiritual harvest and moral husbandry of the world; the toils of those who go before richly reward the diligent reapers who come after them. First are heard the voices of sturdy pioneers crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!" Then mighty prophets and chosen messengers of the Most High take up the same appeal to righteousness and summons to truth, illustrate it by untiring zeal and devotion, and bring it home to the hearts and consciences of men with new meaning and persuasion. And, later still, comes another race, a new generation, appointed to the same onward movement of faith and virtue, chosen to be the happy ingatherers of what had been sown long before!

The great fields, in which God had given a blessed increase, bend heavy with their rich grain ripe for the sickle of the reaper! And, while the old is carefully gleaned and garnered, the field is prepared anew for other hands to watch and keep, until another season of fruition shall again come around. It is a symbol of the grand march of humanity, century pressing close upon century, each generation in turn coming to the front with renewed energy, thought, faith and hope, ready to supply the vacant places, and to continue the best work of the generation which slowly retires before it. Yet, while we rejoice at every fresh accession of courage and hope, and welcome the young recruits with their buoyant faith and noble enthusiasm, we must also and always remember, that *they are not the first.* They are not the beginners. These are but lately arrived in an old, old world, whose forms of life reach far back into dim antiquity, whose modes of thought and feeling have been gradually forming themselves through untold ages into the present institutions of art, science, government, and religion, and whose latest triumphs in any department of industry or knowledge have their roots deep down in the history of primitive man. From the dawn of ancient civilization even till this hour the busy and countless generations of men have labored, and they, who now come upon the stage, merely enter into their labors, or into the fruits of their labor

Our lesson is to appreciate, as we ought, the toils and trials of those who have gone before us! In a certain sense it is true, that we owe everything to the past. Where should we be, or what should we be, to-day, my friends, if we were suddenly cut off from all that the men of old have thought, and said, and wrought for us? We should simply be as the primitive wild man of the forest, half starved, half clad, crouching in a cave, afraid of the thunder, appalled at the lightning, shuddering at the mysterious moaning of the wind, sacrificing dumb animals to propitiate its raging, and engaged in continual warfare with other men, as cruel and ferocious as ourselves. We are saved from that wretched and miserable condition, because hundreds and millions of ancestors, through long years of privation, battle, hunger, and endurance, have fought their way out of it, have thought their way upward, and have secured for us the beginnings of those manifold blessings which make our modern civilization possible. All the past generations of the world were necessary to the formation of our present. "One layer of time Providence has piled up upon another for immemorial ages; and we that live, stand firmly now upon this great mount of the Lord." Let but a single one of these strata below be removed, the whole fabric and ourselves would speedily fall into ruin! Or, as a great philosopher has said, "There is no period so ancient, no country so remote, that it could be canceled, with-

out producing a present shock throughout the earth." Had Greece, or Rome, or Palestine, been other than what it was, Christianity would not have been what it is. Had the Romish hierarchy been differently unfolded, the Reformation would have taken a different course, and we might not have been here to-day. The true record of mankind and the true dealings of God's Providence, are not to be found in the changes of names upon the map, in the rise and fall of dynasties, in the shifting boundaries of states and empires, not in the marches of Kings, nor yet in great tides of emigration. These are but the external and accidental changes. The real progress, toil, and experience of humanity are found in the ideas and sentiments which have arisen and which have prevailed, in the deeds and passions of men, in their virtues or in their guilt. All that makes our life and thought worthy and desirable to-day is the direct outcome of the virtue and genius of the past. Whatever the mistakes, the ignorance, or the crimes of earlier races may have been, we build inevitably and we build securely upon the grand foundations they have laid for us so broad and deep: and our boasted enlightenment, power and grandeur would shrivel into nothingness, were we to lose the influence of Roman jurisprudence, or of Greek art and philosophy, or of the Hebrew religion. There is no learned work published in this century, no scholar at-

ters his fervent thought to-day, that does not re-echo the ideas and sentiments of those ancient, bold and classic pioneers:—

> **"The great of old!**
> **The dead but sceptred sovrans who still rule**
> **Our spirits from their urns."**

And the more carefully we remove the dust and mould of ages, and explore the real faith and virtue of those forerunners, the more clearly we recognize their power, as also our dependence upon them. It has been our greatest privilege merely to enter into the fruits of their labor. They sowed with blood, they watered with tears, and Providence hath given us the increase of that whereon we bestowed no labor!

Take the single phrase, "Christian civilization," and how vast is its import! How full of power, pathos, suggestion! What social tragedies, what political revolutions, what moral transformations, what heights of human joy and peace, what depths of woe and suffering are summed up in that brief expression! Commonplace and hackneyed as the phrase has become, we still all know, as we should also heartily confess, that this broad, free civilization is ours through the toil, tears, struggle and prayers of that great host of human kind that has lived and laid down its life for us. The reformers, the martyrs, the heroes gone have made the way of the Lord, plain, broad and free for us. We worship in freedom of mind, in security of life and

property, because Huss and Jerome, Savonarola and Luther, Servetus and Bruno, Knox and Penn and Roger Williams were willing to face fire or flood for conscience sake. Thank them that there are no more Bartholomew massacres, thank them that there are no more antos-de-fe, no more tortures for free thought. What a succession of struggles, too, to secure civil liberty and equality between man and man! When you visit the British Museum you should there inspect with reverent eyes that old, brown, shriveled parchment, the Magna Charta, with the royal seal attached, bearing the immortal declaration, "No freeman shall be seized or imprisoned save by the law of the land!" Touch it tenderly, and thank God! For the barons wrung it from a cruel King—a blessing for themselves and humanity forever.

And so we may analyze our whole social fabric. Consider the labor expended by past generations to build up such a community as this in which we live; to create commerce and manufactures, to open free opportunities to all, to surround all with strong protective rights, to open public schools, and libraries, and asylums, and all the appliances of art, and industry, and amusement. We need to remember the *real authors* and *originators* of these benefactions. For there are some who declare, and half of whom believe, that progress and civilization somehow come of themselves!

Some persons talk of evolution until they fancy that through some mechanical process, according to some automatic law of development, the world is advanced in morals, culture, science and religion. It is one of the popular fallacies of half-educated Americans. Let us understand, then, that progress comes, and comes only, through human and divine effort. The great motive power in every age has been the thought, will and energy of men inspired by faith in God. Their labors have been quickened and sustained by the same Spirit which enabled Christ to proclaim the glad tidings of the coming of the Kingdom of God. For this reason, they contended successfully against vice, folly, ignorance and crime; they studied and solved the hard problems of social needs and dangers; they kept their hope and courage alive by deep trust in the eternal goodness; and they each served their generation with honor and fidelity.

They labored, and we have entered into their labor. We enter into it, not only by the great legacy of material things which they have left us, wisely organized and richly endowed institutions of learning, of trade, of government, of religion—noble memorials all of the prowess and virtue which established them; but also through that marvelous law of descent which binds us to them in the closest relationship of thought and blood, of language and destiny. Go back a few centu-

ries, and you will find that the ancestors of each one of us are numbered by thousands. As the root lives in vital connection with each fibre and leaflet of the giant oak, so the purpose, will and character of our large ancestry are perpetuated and organized in us. Not only are their features, habits and temperaments transmitted to us, their children, but, more marvelous still, they also live again and live on in our faith, aspirations, faults, mistakes, loves and hopes. The life we are living is very largely the product and resultant of what our fathers and mothers were before us. Hence we inherit, not only the material riches and monuments which they secured, but also, and better still, perhaps, the moral energy, the calm foresight, the heroic spirit, and resolute purpose, through which and by which they were triumphant.

My friends, these considerations are forced upon me with peculiar cogency as I stand in this presence and speak for the last time within these walls made sacred and beautiful by the memory of those, who for nearly a half century have gathered here in religious fellowship and worship. It is our privilege to come after them. A happy and united band of believers, actuated by a high and holy purpose, and brave with Christian fortitude, they opened the way that we might follow, they sowed rich seeds of truth and charity, that we might reap the larger blessing. The hopes and

ideals with which that little company first began did, indeed, by far outrun the facts; and yet, as one of their number so truly said, "They took courage in the thought that no sincere word, no earnest deed, no true life, is ever fruitless." The improvements, conveniences and luxuries of our city to-day make us oblivious of the small means, the poor materials, and the many discouragements with which those of an earlier generation had to deal. Marvelous changes have here taken place, within a comparatively brief period of time. The population of the city has doubled and doubled again and again.* Its territory has extended on every side. If the leading men in this community forty or fifty years ago were to revisit the place, they would scarcely recognize it. Buffalo has changed from a primitive pioneer town to a large, thriving, wealthy, influential metropolis. But what an amount of labor has been expended to bring it into its present condition! For how long a time carts and carriages were dragged through the mud and mire before paving came. How hard to go anywhere before bridges were built. What difficulty in going out at night before the streets were lighted, and when the lake wind howled across the vacant spaces like a tornado. How queer the old pumps still look on the corners—once the only supply of water to the people. Yet

*In the year 1830 the census of Buffalo gave 6321 inhabitants. In 1835 it had increased to 15,621.

one by one the old discomforts and obstacles were removed. Poor wooden houses gave place to stronger and handsomer structures. Fine blocks of stores were erected in prominent places. Then came churches, school-houses, public halls, a court-house, libraries, and gradually this frontier town was well provided with all the material comforts of a modern city. Yet each of these came not of itself, but by noble toil, consecrated effort, and generous giving. Canals, railways, grain elevators, public parks, beautiful cemeteries, art galleries, museums of science, schools of music, and homes of charity—each represents a mighty outlay of energy, patient industry, wise perseverance, and worthy self-sacrifice. And usually these have been introduced in the face of prejudice, of stinginess, of opposition, and of blind conservatism. We are born into all this: our fathers have left us this inheritance of comfort, knowledge and opportunity

At the first legal meeting of this church society, the evening being stormy, there were but three persons present—Mr. N. P. Sprague, Mr. S. N. Callendar, and Mr. John W. Beals. Be it remembered, however, they had a religious service, and Mr. Beals read one of Dr. Channing's sermons. At first their meetings were held at the old Court-House, and afterwards, as their numbers increased, in attic rooms,* up many

*They met for worship at Philharmonica Hall.

narrow stairs, on Main street. Rev. William Steill Brown, their first minister, from Bridgewater, England, was a man of ability and fine scholarship, a class-mate of Rev. Dr. James Martineau. His wife was a granddaughter of the great and good Dr. Priestley. He won the respect of all by his power, purity and uprightness. One who knew him well has thus described him: "Tall and spare in person, his manner was earnest, pleasing and polished. His pulpit delivery and pronunciation were decidedly English. This detracted somewhat from his usefulness. Spite of all deductions, however, Mr. Brown was the ablest divine Buffalo had ever had. Talented, cultivated and sensitive, he missed in this country the comforts and refinements to which he had been accustomed at home. His tastes, education and habits unfitted him for the altered conditions of society, and like many educated foreigners, he could not adapt himself readily to our modes of thought and life. His salary, which was large for those times, proved inadequate for his support; and, the rigorous climate being too severe for the delicate constitution both of himself and of his excellent wife, he was obliged to retire in the spring of 1834."

Rev. A. C. Patterson, who succeeded him, entered upon his duties with considerable vigor, but was soon disappointed and discouraged by the smallness of the society, and, being in ill-health, resigned about two

years after. During his ministry the Sunday School was organized, and the Communion Service regularly celebrated.

Before his departure, the services of Rev. Dr. G. W. Hosmer had been secured. For the remarkably long period of thirty years he ministered to this congregation with singular zeal, affection and devotedness. As our venerable brother and friend is still living I may not speak of him, or of his excellent pastorate, with that freedom or fulness that the subject deserves. And perhaps it is not necessary; for many of you, who grew up under his wise and tender guardianship, can never forget his strong, devout, sympathetic personality, entirely consecrated to the care and nurture of those souls whom Providence had entrusted to his keeping. He carried his parish in his heart. As he prepared his sermon in his study, the individuals of his congregation were before him, and when he spoke, it was to warn against the approaches of vice and of presumptuous sins, and to hold up the everlasting verities of truth and righteousness. The aims, hopes and endeavors of this saintly man are clearly but modestly set forth by himself in his Quarter-Centennial Discourses. Those aims and purposes were heartily supported by worthy members of the society, who, in simple justice, should always be remembered not merely as earnest advocates of our Liberal faith, but also as among the

truest friends of education, of charity, of reform, and public improvements in this community. Largely, if not chiefly, through their energies the first free school was started, the Young Men's Association, and the Orphan Asylum. From the first, their policy was to work for the needy unfortunate, not by themselves, but with all other denominations and with all who would toil for the Kingdom of God among men. And, in consistently carrying out that noble and generous policy, I rejoice to believe this church has always been strong and steadfast.

The long pastorate of Dr. Hosmer opened the way and prepared the soil for the coming of a worthy successor. Rev. Frederick Frothingham unlike his predecessor in personal characteristics was still closely akin to him in Christian consecration and fidelity of purpose. His perceptions of justice and honor were clear and incisive. He was a deep searcher after the hidden secrets of God, and a grand proclaimer of the spiritual things that were revealed to him. With the inspired tone of a prophet, he declared the eternal precepts of duty and rectitude, and endeavored to make others perceive the majesty of Divine laws even as they appeared unto himself. I believe his ministry of eight years among this people brought many souls to a higher standard of spiritual culture, and made the ideal of

Christian life and character more grand, inspiring and ennobling.

Rev. M. K. Schermerhorn's ministry was unexpectedly brief, owing to the ill health of himself and his wife; and he scarcely had the time, or the opportunity, to mature and complete his many excellent plans for the welfare and prosperity of this society. Yet he was an earnest, energetic worker, and excelled as a practical organizer. His own ardor and devotion inspired others. He aimed to have all, and especially the young, actively interested in the life and work of the church. Such had been his experience and observation among members of other denominations, that he regarded all forms of Calvinism with peculiar aversion, and felt called upon to expose the errors and inconsistencies of the popular theology. In defending his own views he was able, scholarly, convincing, and acquitted himself with honor. He spoke brave and eloquent words in behalf of the higher and purer faith of the future, while he endeavored to bring himself and his people up to the noble requirements of that faith.

Each of the three ministers I have thus briefly and imperfectly characterized was peculiar in individual taste, temperament, and religious proclivities. Each cherished his own ideal of what the pastoral work and office should be. They differed widely, too, in their methods of church management and administration.

Yet each was strong and successful in his own way; each performed a useful and necessary office for this parish, which the others did not, or could not, undertake; and each, by the persuasive force of his own words and example, won many lives to virtue and holiness. I am sure, brethren, you all perceive the truth and justness of these remarks: indeed, my comments are for the most part gathered from free expressions which I have heard from the lips of different parishioners. Let us therefore frankly acknowledge our deep indebtedness to these worthy servants; and thank God for the grace which sustained them in their noble efforts.

But some of you may suspect that I wish to appropriate all the praise and glory of the past for the clergy. I have no such intent, my friends. I take them each in their order. The minister is naturally and rightfully the leader, and as such should be respected. I am often reminded, however, that the people are the church and the minister is only the church's servant. But whatever his place or rank, the minister is almost nothing without a worthy following. Even the Master himself sought out twelve chosen disciples, and afterwards the seventy, to assist him in the mighty work of converting and regenerating the world. The success and usefulness of every preacher depends, more largely perhaps than you imagine, upon the direct counsel and

support he receives from sincere and earnest followers. And, if I could read you the private memorials of each of your pastors, I am sure the most interesting and pathetic passages would be those which described their close and intimate sympathy with faithful friends and wise counselors in the church, who upheld their hands and cheered their souls in days of trial and distress. Without such sympathy and support the minister, too easily perhaps, becomes a poor, tired, timid, disheartened man: whereas, on the other hand, the more closely his people stand beside him, the more glad, glorious and triumphant will be his ministry. Such excellent and helpful parishioners have never been wanting in this society. Mr. N. P. Sprague, speaking of the difficulties and embarrassments of the early years, said: "The church succeeded, because it had the aid of a few resolute and determined men, whose interest in its welfare never flagged. It had also the encouragement of a little band of women, who for intelligence, efficiency, unaffected piety, benevolence, and every Christian grace that adorns and renders women lovely, were never surpassed." And Mr. Sprague expressed the wish that in our new church there might be a memorial tablet to the memory of "six blessed women,"* who in his estimation were the noblest workers the society

*Mrs. John B. Macy, Mrs. S. N. Callender, Mrs. J. W. Beals, Mrs. Oliver G. Steele, Mrs. N. P. Sprague, Mrs. William Lovering. Closely connected with these were Mrs. J. W. Williams and Mrs. Dorsheimer.

ever had. I am happy to believe that the devoted interest and sympathy of those early friends have been imitated and emulated by those who came after them, and that to-day hearts as earnest and hands as active are ready to help forward the same excellent cause rendered the more beautiful and sacred to them by the example of those who sowed the good seed so long ago, and then rested from their labors.

Did time and space allow, I might enumerate and call by name those gracious lives which touch ours—the blessing of whose influence to-day rests upon us. But the precious memorial is long—though not too long—and I dare not begin it. Yet they are with us still, in sympathy, in tender regard, in hallowed affection; and, as we recall their familiar forms, they seem to enter the sanctuary as of yore, and to take again their wonted places:—the venerable presence of aged ones, whom God in his mercy long spared for our counsel and guidance; and then a larger company of men and women stricken down in the full vigor and maturity of their powers, removed from the earnest pursuits of active life, when, as it seemed, we could least afford to give them up,—industrious, faithful, noble toilers, called from the vineyard on earth to the higher husbandry of Heaven! And then, that host of fair and beauteous ones, cut off in childhood, the tender hope and the glad promise to us of a better work and mis-

sion here among men, than we had been able to accomplish, yet, in God's own time and mercy, gathered to join that larger and holier family in the Heavenly Mansion.

"The dear forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved ones, the true-hearted,
Come to visit us once more.

They—the young and strong—who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life.

And they, the holy ones and weakly,
Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
Spake to us on earth no more.

With slow and noiseless footstep
Come the messengers divine,
Take the vacant place beside us,
Gently touch your heart and mine.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes in blessings ended,
Breathing from lips of air.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,
All our fears are laid aside,
If we remember only
Such as these have lived and died"

Let us not call them dead! They still live! They live in our thoughts, in our blessings, in our life; and, though absent from sight, still speak to us messages of

faith and love. Death hath set a seal upon their excellence; and, now that they are vanished, we appreciate the worth that was unfolded in their lives, and feel the full force of their virtuous example. By the memory of what they were and what they achieved, they help us, they comfort us, they guide, and gladden, and bless us. And how grateful must it be to them to know that they are thus honored and remembered, not with empty admiration, but in a manner that ministers to the strength of our characters. Having done what they could, and having laid down the burden and toil of life, the charm of their benevolence and piety is wafted as a sweet odor of sanctity upon those who come after them.

And, if they could speak to us in audible tones, in this last hour of public service in this house, what would their message be? What, but a new summons to toil and duty, a higher and diviner call to work while the day lasts, for the night cometh wherein no man can work! Thus let us cherish the memory of our dear departed, and in this spirit let us interpret the voices of the dead. As we appreciate and realize the full extent of their mission and ministry while on earth, let us awaken to a clearer and deeper sense of our own obligation. The charge committed to our keeping may not be abused or neglected. The cause of liberal and rational Christianity here established and

consecrated by their noble services it is for you and your children to perpetuate. It is not enough, brethren, that we leave it as good as we found it. If we are animated by their high purpose, we shall improve it and shall increase it. That which does not grow soon begins to die. While we may *enter* into their labors, we dare not *rest* in them. Therefore, to preserve our rich heritage, we must add something to the knowledge, the virtue, the piety, the charity, and the happiness of mankind about us. As worthy successors of those energetic leaders we must accept with Christian zeal the higher tasks and the larger opportunities now waiting for us in our own church work, and in the needs of this community. Then let this day mark for us not the close but the beginning of an era in the history of this society. With the divine blessing, let us do our part so well that those who come after us may praise God for the work of our hands.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

In Laying the Corner-Stone

OF THE NEW CHURCH.

The corner-stone of the new Unitarian Church was laid with appropriate services Thursday, October 16th. Prayer was offered by Rev. J. H. Hartzell, of the Universalist Society. An address was then given, in behalf of the trustees, by Mr. John Felton reviewing the history of the church. After this the congregation united in singing a hymn, "Christ the Corner-stone." The ceremony of depositing and sealing in the corner-stone an iron box, containing various documents relative to the past history and membership of the church and of the Sunday School, was performed by Mr. S. N. Callender, the only surviving incorporator of the society. Our venerable and beloved brother was assisted in this by Miss Bessie Williams, one of the youngest members. An address was next delivered by the pastor, Rev. G. W. Cutter, congratulating the society upon the auspicious enterprise now fairly begun, and exhorting the people to pledge themselves anew to the support of rational and practical Christianity. In closing he read affectionate and stirring letters of sympathy and encouragement from Rev. Dr. Hosmer, of Newton, Mass.; from Rev. Mr. Frothingham, of Milton, Mass.; and from Rev. Mr. Schermerhorn, of New-

port, R. I. The reading of these letters elicited much applause and enthusiasm. Rev. Dr. A. T. Chester being present was invited to speak and responded briefly. He referred to the excellent work already accomplished in this city by the Unitarian church, and to his deep regard for the ministers of the society. He expressed the kindest and most appreciative sentiments, and bade his hearers to go on as they had begun, and they would deserve praise and honor. The closing hymn was then sung: "Come, kingdom of our God." The benediction was pronounced by the pastor. The day was soft, balmy and beautiful, and, by a happy coincidence, was the forty-third anniversary of the installation of Rev. Dr. Hosmer.

Artotype, W. J Baker, Buffalo, N. Y.

CHURCH OF OUR FATHER. Erected 1880.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

CHURCH OF OUR FATHER

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING,

October 13, 1880.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY.

"JUBILATE DEO," - - - BARBIERI.

INTRODUCTORY SERVICE, - REV. J. H. HARTZELL.

"I WILL EXTOL THEE," - - - COSTA.

DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH

MINISTER AND PEOPLE.

To be read by the Minister and People, alternating. All standing.

Know ye that the Lord He is God. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

Incline Thine ear unto us, O Lord, and hearken unto our words.

HYMN OF DEDICATION.

Come Holy One in Love,
Shed on us from above
Thine own bright ray!
Infinite Holiness!
Do Thou our offering bless,
Seal it with righteousness,
We humbly pray.

Take Thou the house we raise,
Make it thy dwelling place,
O Lord, our God!
That Thee all souls may know;
That all thy life may show;
That Christ in all may grow;
Be this abode.

Come then, Thou Holy One!
Though Heaven be thy throne
Here dwell and reign.
Make, by thy pure decree,
This temple worthy Thee;
Thine shall the glory be,
Ever. AMEN.

DEDICATORY ADDRESSES.

REV. G. W. HOSMER, D. D. REV. F. FROTHINGHAM.

REV. M. K. SCHERMERHORN.

TE DEUM, - - - - KOTZSCHMAR.

PRAYER. DOXOLOGY.

BENEDICTION.

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DEDICATORY ADDRESSES.

ADDRESS BY REV. DR. HOSMER.

My friends, I am glad to meet you here. I have come a long way to rejoice with you; and we all with devout gladness, looking into each others' faces with so many dear old memories touching our hearts, will offer thanksgiving to God, that you have this appropriate place to worship. I rejoice in its beauty; it is honestly paid for, and will not in the shape of a church debt, shut the door to all but the rich. Why should not the place of worship be beautiful? We respect and honor the Puritan, we glory in our Pilgrim ancestry; but why should we keep their bald, naked forms of worship? We love Whittier, and all the Quakers with the inner light and inner life; but why keep their square box meeting-house? Beauty is of God. Let it come into his sanctuary to glorify it. So we rejoice with you, and as we come, the uppermost thought must be, "It is good for us to be here," "My Father's house," "The gate of Heaven." Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, Thou and the ark of thy strength, let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and thy faithful ones shout for joy!

It is interesting in this beautiful temple, raised by the faith and art of our day, to look back to the early

recognition of the true God and to his first temples. Jacob made his first journey from his father's house to the afar off land of his mother's kindred. At evening of the first day, wearied and homesick, he lay down upon the ground, a stone his pillow, the starry arch his shelter. He had learned that Jehovah was round about the tents of his father, but now he was lonely and like a tired child fell asleep; and a vision opened to him of ladder steps, and angels descending and ascending, and words of promise from on high, and he awoke exclaiming: Behold the Lord is in this place and I knew it not: this is none other than the house of God: this is the gate of Heaven. And there he built an altar, and dedicated the magnificent temple. All nature is the house of God! It was the first dedication service.

Centuries rolled on. David and Solomon with grateful reverence summoned the art of the world, and poured out their wealth to build a temple on Zion for all their tribes to worship God. And when it was completed, Solomon, with royal magnificence, dedicated it to its great uses. To every Jew it was the House of God; the very Gate of Heaven. The old Hebrew heart hung about Mount Zion with worshipful reverence—beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth!

Again centuries roll away. The human soul grown in grace can hear higher truth; and Jesus said, "Believe me, the hour is coming and now is, when neither

in Jerusalem alone, nor in Gerizim alone shall men worship the Father. God is spirit, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit, and in truth." Any place a temple is the prophetic sense; any hour the accepted time, and each soul its own priest to bear sacrifices of work, love, and worship to God's altar. And here to-day Paul's words are coming to you and me, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Jesus would show the soul and God in spiritual relation: possibly so close and intimate, nearer than dearest friends can be, God in it, and it in God: no temple, nor priest necessary to come between, and as sometimes to keep apart God and his child. But Jesus was too wise to disparage the scaffoldings helpful for spiritual edification. What more touching than his tender reverence for the temple on Zion? "My Father's House" he called it, and he kept attentive to the services of the ancient worship. "As his custom was," says the record, "he went up to the Synagogue with his friends and neighbors of Nazareth." And we know what text he took to preach from one Sabbath morning. The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because "He hath annointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of

our Lord." So in the old Synagogue was the new light, spirit and worship of Jesus. And now here, as the years fly on, we would follow Jesus into the heights and depths. I can wish nothing better for you, my friends, than that, as you shall come with your children into this beautiful church, you will never cease to think that you are coming to your Father's house, close home for inspiration and guidance; your church a place to think and pray, a mount of vision, the sanctuary of worship.

What words can I find to express your need of this sanctuary and its services? God has so made us that we must worship Him, in order to be safe, and do well. We are made to be dependent, to look up, to pray. A sense of God is the deepest thing in us, a divine instinct leading us to Him, and when we come to extremity of trial, if not before, we feel this instinctive sense of power above us, the Supreme Being, the Sovereign Disposer. The untutored Indian in his extremity prays in his way, and the hard, wicked man, when his last hope is thwarted, tries to lift up his soul to that Sovereign Something whom he dreads to think of. How the Belshazzars tremble when they see the mysterious handwriting on the wall! Yes, we are made to be religious; made to look up to God, to think about him, to revere and adore him, made to hold communion, to imitate, and grow into his likeness. All our springs are in

God. We never know what we can be, until in the clear reason we come close to the Father and take into our souls the power of his fullness. Like the little brooks from the hills, we are meagre and small until flowing on over plains and through valleys we come to the *ocean tide* and then the little streams become the broad, deep river on which navies ride, and the riches of commerce are borne. So it is man is glorified by getting close to God in worship. We become like that we venerate and love. Friend grows into the likeness of friend, and the worshiper is transformed into the image of the God he adores. The worshipful spirit in its sublime waiting and longing for God and holiness, like the calm lake, takes all the heavens into its bosom, those heavens of God, in the devout spirit, built by a wonderful edification into substantial character. O friends, to worship God is the highest, grandest thing we can do; worship is preparation for the best living in service of God or man. Worship earnestly, intelligently, not in dead formalism, and you will deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God. True worship glorifies the humblest man or woman. Before it, the world's riches, shows, titles shrivel to nothing. What a blessed dignity it is, that we *can* worship, and what an obligation binds us in the call to worship. God invites it, and our welfare demands it. Expect great things *from* God, do great things *for* God. But now think how

we are moved away, shut off from worship. The little dollar close to the eye, the prestige of great business, and social eminence, eclipse spiritual things; the little visible that we clutch close to us, shuts off the sublimities of the unseen, and we neglect, poorly appreciate, forget worship. Not that by nature we hate God, and won't worship. O no, no—but thoughtlessly we bury ourselves in graves of worldliness, and sun and stars shine upon those graves in vain. And so in bitter moments, catching glimpses of these spiritual possibilities, you do well to make provision for worship.

Those who in this city opened the way of liberal thought about God, and Christ, retribution and immortality, built their temple for worship forty-seven years ago. It was humble compared to this, but it answered their need; they worshiped God in it, and strengthened their souls, and made their lives better. They were a goodly company, and they have gone, all but a few, who still linger in the sunset of their day! You have made ready a beautiful temple, so commodious, fitting, attractive. With your simple ritual it will draw you to worship. Its chaste beauty will lift your thoughts, and make prayer and hymn and sermon more impressive. I rejoice that you have it. O, you will *need* all the help it can give you. May it be indeed a mount of vision; the air clear, and light full; the heavens all open above it. May gathered worshipers with purity

of heart, out of the depths of humanity, see all the stars and keep the path of immortal destiny, despite the world's drifting currents and blinding mists. And may your worship here prepare you for purer worship in that temple not made with hands eternal in the heavens!

ADDRESS BY REV. FREDERICK FROTHINGHAM.

We dedicate to-night a solitary church. Not solitary because the only one in this city of churches; but because among them all it stands alone. A sister, it is hardly welcomed as a sister, but by all, save one, tolerated only as a stranger, and not of "the household of faith." Though "with malice toward none and in charity toward all," all, with that one exception, must and do, when true to their own published standards, greet it and its prosperity with misgiving and regret.

Painful though this position be, it *is* our position. We accept it, not because we would, but because we must. We do not choose it. It chooses us. We would not prefer it. It is appointed us. The point for us is to be true to it. If sad, it yet is glorious. It has its duty. It is rich in opportunity. It makes this church the centre of many eyes. In this dedication-hour let us note well that duty and that opportunity. They are the duty and opportunity of every new Truth, of every new Religion, of every Reform, of Jesus, of Paul, of Luther, of every evangelist and prophet of the world's better day to come.

Take we this home to our souls to-day. The fathers

of this church knew it, accepted it, in its name testified, did and dared, and for it lived. Is not the thought of them warm and bright in our memory to-day? Do not their venerable shades rise, fair and appealing, before our thought? From their graves—nay, from the living heavens whither they have gone—do they not call unto us to be true unto our trust, to see that at least it get no harm from us? A solitary trust! Ah! therefore how intensely sacred! How dependent then on our fidelity! Were it represented here by ten or twenty churches, instead of one, the responsibility of each would be qualified by that of all the rest. But one alone bearing here its banner, how momentous that this one be what it ought! It confronts the dangers that always beset the solitary. There is the internal danger—the danger of division. How beautifully true against that it has been through a long course of harmonious years! Does not our holy cause appeal to us to utterly guard against it now? Does it not commandingly enjoin on us to let nothing lower than duty to Righteousness, to God, to mankind, or to country lessen our devotion or make lukewarm our zeal? Does it not bid us, for its great sake, stand shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, hand joined in hand; so that, like the great phalanx of Macedon of old, which could not be broken from without, it may have all its impregnable strength? Are we true to that great Light, that Hope

of the world, by which we are, and for which the church lives, no outward power can break us. Fatal weakness can come only from within. The unselfish loyalty of each shall make strong the life of all.

Another danger is the temptation of the solitary—the temptation of making too much or too little of that which is peculiar to itself, and thus of not doing justice to its cause. This church stands for Unitarian Christianity. In other words, it stands for that religion which, as we think the true religion of Jesus, aims to bring all thought, all life, all men into the Unity of God. Its God is one. Its universe is one. Its banner-word is the Unity of God. Its prayer is that sublime prayer of Jesus: "That they all may be one." Herein it stands alone. The churches around are *sect*arian; it is *unit*arian. They make division, it makes oneness. Their oneness is that of exclusion; its oneness is that of an all-embracing reconciliation. They shut out more than they take in. It goes forth even, like Jesus, "to seek that which *was lost*." It is the one non-sectarian church. But even its great name may be sectarianly cherished, and may become a shibboleth of the sectarian spirit. And, on the other hand, in recoil from that, it may be so weakly held and so feebly pronounced that men shall miss its glorious import and confound it with the very influences which it would fain destroy. You of this church, then, owe it to your great cause that this church become

not the church of a sect, and that, so far as in you lies, the Unitarian name become not a sectarian name: and, on the other hand, that the great Unitarian thought be so clearly affirmed and so loyally illustrated, that, like a divine clarion, it shall call all men, hungry and longing for its better day into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." For the freedom of the mind, the freedom of the soul, the freedom of religion, this church stands—the only freedom in which all men can become one and be as brethren. Let this church magnify its office, neither exaggerating nor failing in clearest tones to proclaim that for which it stands, and these dangers shall be helpers only, and not hindrances, to its perfect work.

Keeping thus its own place, united and devoted, its very solitude shall help to give effect to its chief testimony. And that great testimony is—higher than even the unity of God—to God Himself. Here it ceases to be solitary, and rises into the high fellowship of all churches and all religions. *God* is the mighty name in which and for which this church, with every other, stands. Without that name it would have no meaning. God! of names the supreme; charged with what unspeakable comfort; solvent of all perplexities; answer to all hard questions; our refuge and strength in trouble; name of inspiration, hope, promise, prophecy; expressing the absolute Good, the immutable Justice, the

beauty of Love, the Peace, the Rest, the Life Eternal! To this august verity, as the reality of realities, the church bears witness. *He* gives the church her place. Is it not one which may well make her dear to the heart of man? Were she but faithful to it! What higher mission could she find than to set forth God?

God! How grandly He has been interpreted to us in these late days as "the Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness!" And this word is given us as the thought of inspired souls of long past ages, and culminating in that blessed Son of God whose dear name we hail as that of our Leader and Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. For that "Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for Righteousness," how can a church stand, if righteousness be not its all-pervading, ceaseless, never-forgotten aim? Here it stands upon the earth. Amid the seething, rushing crowds of human life it stands, silently, but not unspeakingly, its spire pointing to the heavens, prophetic of the morning, and in the evening suggesting the undying day, and it invites men to gather together within its fold into the presence of the Highest. To what purpose if they enter not into that Righteousness which shall make the living man the new incarnation of the living God, and so bring to pass here on earth the Justice, the Peace, the Love, the Brotherhood, which shall make the very desert of this world rejoice and blossom, so mighty and divine a re-creative power shall it shed upon Humanity?

Oh Righteousness! which how few have faith in, and yet in which every one does and must believe; which demandest such sacrifice, and yet bringest such divine reward; which involvest such sorrow and leadest into such wide and heavenly joy; which glidest into life with such sweet saving and comest sometimes through such awful storm; which man so shrinks from and yet hungers for as he can hunger for only God; cloudy pillar in the day-time, but shining with such blissful light by night: to thee, "stern daughter of the voice of God," by the sacred service of this hour, we dedicate this house! For thee it is! For thee may it be eloquent! For thee may it be a living well-head of help and power! Its noblest beauty is thy beauty. Its highest speech is thy word. Incarnation of the *Living God,* may it be for this people and this beloved city thy temple, thy ever fairer- and more venerable-growing home!

But, dear Friends, how shall this be? By making the dedication of this hour the dedication of the hours that shall follow. The dedication of this hour we, as your representatives, can make. But that of the days and years to come can be only yours and theirs who succeed you. From this hour you take up the dedication service. Oh! to what will you dedicate this church-edifice? You may dedicate it to forgiveness of injuries; to forgetfulness of the things that are and ought

ever to be behind; to brotherly love; to that divine charity which hopes, endures, bears, believes, is patient, "and *thinketh* no evil," rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; to Justice, Temperance, Truth and Freedom. If to these you dedicate it, a holy beauty shall rest upon it, a temple of the All-Blessing One it shall become! The rejoicing heart of grateful man shall hail it as a home. The peace, the grace, the power of God shall abide upon it and within it.

May it know no other dedication. And when it crumbles into dust at last, may it be as when a good man dies!

ADDRESS BY REV. M. K. SCHERMERHORN.

Friends, as the last and least of your ex-pastors, let me too congratulate you that we are here to dedicate a church.

But what do we mean by a church? The stone, brick, mortar, wood, glass, paint, metal, carpets and cushions, which, all put together in certain artistic proportions and in a certain artistic way, constitute an edifice which is properly called a church? Is this what we are here to set apart, give away, consecrate? If so then is it a "vain oblation" we have brought to Him, of whom Solomon reverently and wisely said, "Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, much less this house which we have builded." Is it the altar, or the gift upon the altar; the alabaster box, or the precious ointment it was made to contain; the outer materialistic emblem, or the inner spirit of Truth, of Love and of Life we are here to make an offering of? If it be *this*, then it seems more reverent to keep silence, go away and leave this building to crumble again into the fragments from which it has to no adequate or acceptable purpose been reared. But if it be *this*, the altar

made sacred by the gifts placed upon it, the alabaster box filled with precious ointment, the outer emblem sanctified by the worshiping, indwelling spirit of Truth, Love and Life, then will our offering indeed be blest, and our Service, in reality as in name, be a Dedication.

A mistake very commonly made with reference to the meaning of the word Church, is, that it applies to the edifice in which people gather for religious purposes, rather than to the people themselves. The original *church* was the *people* without reference to the place; they might meet in an upper room, in a private house, beneath a tree, in an open field, in a cave or cavern of the earth, it was all the same a church:—not *it* but *they*, the people assembled. To such churches as these Paul wrote all his letters; and through the agency of such churches,—not aided by magnificent piles of architecture, nor by architecture of any sort, but aided simply by the enthusiasm of Humanity and of the Divine Spirit which had taken complete possession of them—through the agency of such, houseless, homeless, roofless churches, *assemblies of devout people*, organized and cooperating for devout purposes, was brought about that wonderful reformation of the first and second centuries we call the introduction and propagation of Christianity.

Going back to the original meaning of the term we

may define *a church*, as *any* organization of devout people, cooperating for the two-fold purpose of divine worship and of humane work. Let not this signification be lost! A living, loving organism of human hearts, hands, heads, not a cold, dead edifice of stone, brick and wood constitutes a church.

Your formula of Dedication, then, using words adapted to the best expression of meaning, would be as follows:—"We dedicate ourselves, the *people*, who now and henceforth shall gather within these walls, to the work of conserving and correlating, of gathering in and giving out, the principles of Religion in the threefold developments of Faith, Freedom and Fellowship." Of course in thus dedicating yourselves, you necessarily dedicate the edifice, in which you are hereafter to gather for the inspiration of Worship and Work—just as the precious jewel makes precious the casket in which it is placed for awhile, or as the consecrated soul encased in a body of dust and ashes, by the mere fact of its own consecration, consecrates also the body and keeps it consecrated so long as it remains in it. So you dedicate this edifice, by dedicating yourselves. If you are sanctified, set apart, given away, consecrated, this of itself, and this only, will transform this building which your hands have built, into a true House of Worship, a true Temple of Christ, a true Church of the Living God.

Said Epictetus: "If you had a mind to adorn your city by consecrated monuments, first consecrate in yourselves that most beautiful of all monuments, a character formed to purity, justice and benevolence. Not by raising magnificent temples will you confer the greatest benefits upon mankind, but by exalting magnificent souls. Do not variegate the structure of your walls with Eubaean and Spartan stones only, but adorn yourselves with culture and virtue, for God is honored by the characters of those who worship him, not by wood or stone."

Now then we are dedicating the people. To what more especially are we dedicating them? I answer negatively. Not to the seeking and securing, through the medium of this new and attractive edifice, of purely social enjoyments or gratifications. This is not to be a rendezvous, an attractive spot in which betimes to meet and greet congenial friends, to form and strengthen social ties, to gratify social tastes or to enhance social interests. Much less is it to be, what so many so-called churches appear to be, a sort of ecclesiastical club-house, in which congenial people, of similar ways of thinking and of similar stations in society, are to band themselves together into a sort of ecclesiastical clique, thus adding one more to those numerous society-dividing, society-cursing circles, which in Scripture phrase we may designate as

"wheels within wheels." Certainly to no selfish or exclusive socialism of this sort; and, as a prime or direct object, to socialism of *no sort*, do we dedicate this church. Nor again to the pursuit of science and intellectual culture. Nor again to the practice of æsthetic formalisms or of traditional ceremonialisms which are commonly called worship. Nor again to the propagation of dogmas, merely for the dogmas' sake. Nor again to the building up of a sect, merely for the sake of the sect. To none of these. Let sectarians build sects, and dogmatists propagate dogmas; let hypocrites make broad their phylacteries and use the "vain repetitions" which heathen use, thinking to be "heard by their much speaking!" Let our schools and our literature attend to the advancement of science and of purely intellectual culture; and let our homes and social gatherings outside the church be the places for purely social enjoyments and congenialities! The people who constitute a Church, especially a Unitarian Church, are untrue to their mission, if as a church they give themselves to any of these as main objects; or indeed if they permit them to come in except in an entirely secondary or indirect sense.

We dedicate this people, then, positively, to what they were dedicated nearly a half century ago, and to what they have ever since, thank God, been dedicated, only now with new emphasis and with redoubled

consecration, we dedicate them to the faith, freedom and fellowship of Religion pure and undefiled.

First to Faith. Whether there be a better definition for Faith than Paul gave, "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen," I doubt; but I may perhaps give a modern definition of his definition, by the use of the word Optimism—a belief that there is good in everything, and that from everything good will ultimately result. An optimist is only another term for one who has faith; faith in goodness, universal and eternal—in and through and beneath, as well as above all things; goodness, as a germ of life all-absorbing, all-perfecting, all-glorifying, immutably ineradically implanted in every creature, especially in every rational creature of the universe; goodness that allies all creation with the Creator, and makes certain the fulfillment of the prediction of Jesus, that in the end all shall "become one in Him." Unitarianism is optimism; every true Unitarian is an optimist—that is a man of faith. And it is to a fuller measure of this Faith, sublimest of all human endowments or acquirements, that we to-day dedicate the people who constitute this church.

We dedicate them in the second place to Freedom. Faith, or optimism as I have called it, may further be defined as *piety of the intellect;* the intellect bowing in truthful, hopeful reverence before all things. In kin-

dred phrase Freedom may be defined as *piety of the will*: the will asserting itself and yet recognizing its rightful limits. Freedom is not what many suppose it to be, an extreme, but rather a golden mean; it is as far removed from license on the one hand as it is from abject slavishness on the other. Abject slavishness is *impiety of the will* in one extreme of its development. License is *impiety of the will* in another extreme of its development. He who is content to wear fetters upon lip, or head, or hand, or heart, is impious toward himself and his opportunities. He who, breaking off all fetters, rushes into anarchy and lawlessness, is impious towards others and their opportunities. Both are to be avoided. Like the Scylla and Charybdis of ancient fable, they lie opposite, and he who turns his course in either direction risks the divine manhood, with which his craft is freighted. Hold to the mid-stream: that, and that alone, is freedom. The Golden Rule, as stated positively by Jesus, and negatively by Confucius, contains in itself all of what I have called "the rightful limitations of the self-asserting will." "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." "Do not unto others that ye would not they should do unto you." Would you like others to respect your honest opinions, then respect theirs. Would you dislike to have others attempt to compel your conscience, or to dictate to you what doctrines you shall believe, or what course of conduct you shall

pursue? Then do not attempt to compel others' consciences, or to dictate to them what opinions they shall hold, or what course of conduct (so long as they infringe not upon the rights of others) they shall pursue. This is piety of the will, the will asserting itself and yet recognizing its rightful limits; and this is Freedom manly and true, to a fuller measure of which, as a second sublime principle we to-day dedicate the people who constitute this church.

In the third and last place we dedicate them to Fellowship. By fellowship we do not mean mere conviviality or even mere sociability, but something far more helpful, far more unselfish. I have called Faith, piety of the intellect; and Freedom, piety of the will; in like manner I would define Fellowship as piety of the affections—the affections going out in purity and self-forgetfulness to seek and cling to others, interested in their interests, rejoicing in their joys, sorrowing in their sorrows. This is a thing quite different from that sociability we hear so much talk about in our churches, which consists chiefly, if not entirely, in hand-shaking, formal greetings, and occasional brief conversations upon the weather, the news, the gossip of society, the latest book, lecture or sermon, and other such like passing topics of the day. All this is well enough, and may be a part, though the smallest and least important part, of Fellowship. It may also be

no part of it at all, but only a disguise beneath which lurks that selfish individualism, which, beyond the circle of kindred or intimate friends, has no interests, no joys, no sorrows but its own. "I think for myself and don't care how others think; I act for myself and don't care how others act; I attend to my own welfare and leave others to attend to theirs;"—not in spoken words do we hear this in our churches, but we see it in the deeds, we feel it in the spirit, in the icy, isolated atmosphere of individualism which many of those who come and go carry about with them. "Every man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost" is a motto, which in truth and justice might be written over the doors of nearly all the establishments of industry, business and trade the world over. Paul said, "No man liveth for himself." "Look not every man upon his own interests, but also every man upon the interests of others." "We that are strong ought to help the weak, and not to please themselves." "If one member suffers let all the members suffer with it, or if one rejoice let all rejoice with it." And Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; let us abide in each other." This is fellowship genuine and true; this is piety of the affections, the affections going out in purity and self-forgetfulness to seek and cling to others.

I have seen churches, which were like a garden of

climbing plants, each clinging to its own particular pole, and sending out not even a tendril of vital interest to assist the growth and fruitfulness of others. I have seen churches which were like clusters of floating icebergs upon the sea, never touching except to freeze. I have seen churches which were like groups of solitary peaks in a mountain range, self-sufficient, and those which were loftiest frowning down upon those which were humble, with the frown of everlasting barrenness and death. Not such a church as this are we here to dedicate to-day, but a church, which from its first organization has been, and hereafter, we pray, may much more abundantly be, a church after the New Testament pattern—a vine with its branches, a body with its members, a brotherhood, a family, or as Paul expresses it, using the language of most sacred and sympathetic intimacy, "*A Household of Faith.*"

We dedicate then the people of this church anew, and to that to which from the first they have been dedicated, to Religion pure and undefiled, in the threefold manifestations of Piety of the intellect, Piety of the will, Piety of the affections; Faith, Freedom, Fellowship! These three words, write them upon the pulpit, write them upon yonder pews, write them upon the gates of this House of Worship, where in shining letters all may see and heed them as they come in and as they go out! Write them upon your foreheads,

upon the tablets of your memory; talk of them by the way; and when you sit in your homes teach them diligently to your children and to your children's children forever !

To Faith, Freedom and Fellowship of Religion pure and undefiled,—to these you are to-day now re-consecrated, and, as a sign and seal of this re-consecration you have formally dedicated this new edifice which your generosity has built, as a temple of Worship to the one only living God,—the God and Father who, to our eyes, has been most clearly revealed through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, whom on this account we delight to call Our Master.

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